

Married priesthood restored to U.S. Byzantine Church



METROPOLITAN JUDSON PROCYK. On July 15 he promulgated the new laws for the Byzantine Catholic Metropolia of Pittsburgh.

By Father Nicholas R.A. Rachford, JCL

PITTSBURGH — A restored married priesthood is contained in one of the 59 statutes of particular law promulgated by Metropolitan Judson Procyk on July 15. They will take effect on Sept. 1, 1998.

The new law is the result of several years of study and discussion by the metropolia's Council of Hierarchs. They were assisted by their Commission on Canonical Affairs composed of a canon lawyer representative from each eparchy and a bishop-chairman. Chairing the commission was Passaic, N.J.'s Bishop Andrew Pataki, also a canon lawyer. Other members were: Father Richard Whetstone of the Archep-

archy of Pittsburgh; Father Robert Hospodar of the Eparchy of Passaic; Father Nicholas Rachford of the Eparchy of Parma; and Father Philip Acquaro of the Eparchy of Van Nuys, Calif.

While many of the new laws do not represent a change from the past, several, such as the married priesthood, do. One such new law will

allow a limited number of lay persons in each parish to distribute the divine Eucharist. Another law notes that women may not serve at the altar during the divine services. There is also a law that dispenses from the obligation of attending the Divine Liturgy on a holy day of obligation when it falls on a Saturday or a Monday, with the exception

of the feast of the Nativity.

Other areas regulated by the new laws include: dignities to be bestowed upon clerics, the eparchial assembly, presbyteral councils, parish pastoral and financial councils, regulations for acolytes and lectors, seminary training, lifestyle of clerics, societies of the apostolic life,

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Byzantine Spirit Day action-packed, fun-filled

By Horizons staff

PARMA — A group of dedicated and spirited Byzantine Catholics of the Ohio Protosynod made the July 12 Byzantine Spirit Day one that will be long-remembered.

Nearly 700 people visited the Cathedral Center between 11:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. to enjoy food and dancing, to hear talks, tour the cathedral and participate in special youth events.

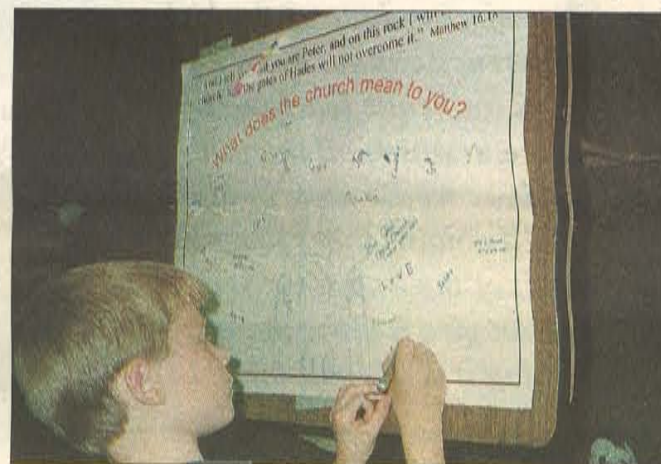
Close to 100 children visited the children's room and participated in the activities there. These included Twinkles the Clown making balloon figures, face-painting, crafts, storytelling and a sing-along.

On the Snow Road lawn in front of the cathedral teens had the opportunity to participate in a lively discussion led by Father Thomas Loya. Pre-teen "American Gladiator" type games and a Dino Jump for little ones were also outside. Later, there was a DJ with music for the teens and adults in the Carpathian Hall.

The St. Nicholas Room held displays by various parishes, organizations and commercial enterprises. These, along with the cathedral gift

EVEN CHILDREN know how much the church means to them.

(More photos of Byzantine Spirit Day on page 7)



shop, provided opportunities for purchasing distinctive Byzantine clothing, religious articles and recordings.

Three talks took place in the cathedral itself. Leslie Hrusch spoke about her experience of having left her Byzantine heritage and then returning. Hrusch has traveled extensively throughout the United States and Central America and has done missionary work.

Virgildee Daniel, a guidance counselor at Padua Franciscan High School, Parma, spoke about his discovery and experience of the Byzantine rite.

Jesuit Father Carl A. Bonk is a bi-ritual priest serving the Eparchy of Parma in the Cleveland-Akron area who spoke about his experience of ministry with a foot in each camp.

He noted that he has long had a great love for the spiritual heritage of the Eastern churches, especially as found in its iconography and liturgies.

There was also a panel discussion providing the opportunity for those attending to ask questions and get answers about the Byzantine Catholic Church.

Not only did local residents attend the day's events, visitors from two other eparchies were there, and each said they liked the concept of the day so much that they were going back to their own dioceses to suggest that they have a Byzantine Spirit Day. One was Donald Warhola of our Pittsburgh eparchy, the other was a Redemptorist priest from Canada.

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Assisted suicide destined for Michigan's November ballot

By Dan Digmann

LANSING, Mich. — A Michigan pro-life coalition says that in the days left before the November election it will work to rally voter opposition to a state ballot issue that would legalize physician-assisted suicide.

On July 20, Michigan's four-member Board of State Canvassers unanimously certified a petition drive by Merian's Friends to put on the Nov. 3 ballot a measure that calls for legalizing assisted suicide. The state board's decision came despite testimony questioning the legality of how the 261,455 signatures deemed valid were collected.

Barring any court or legislative intervention, the issue will now be decided by voters in Dr. Jack Kevorkian's home state.

Citizens for Compassionate Care, the pro-life coalition guided in part by officials from Michigan Right to Life and the Michigan Catholic Conference, alleged July 20 that the people collecting a sizable portion of the signatures for Merian's Friends were hired from out of state. Even though the people lived in Michigan long enough to become registered voters, coalition leaders said they should not have been considered valid residents.

Ed Rivet, Michigan Right to Life's legislative director, said the signatures therefore should have been discounted. He alleged that many who collected signatures have since moved away from Michigan.

"There was a miscarriage of justice," Rivet said. "We argued ... that in order to circulate petitions you have to be a resident of the state. They weren't planning to stay, and they were not, in our view, valid residents of Michigan."

Dr. Edward C. Pierce, a retired family physician and chairman of the Ann Arbor-based Merian's Friends, said his group hired a professional firm in March to help collect signatures, but added that the company used predominantly Michigan residents to assist with the effort.

Merian's Friends submitted 378,873 signatures to the state, which rejected more than 100,000 signatures. It needed 247,127 valid signatures.

Brad Wittman, director of infor-

mation and voter registration with the state's elections division, said the Board of State Canvassers certified the petition because it checks solely to verify that the petition circulators and signers are registered voters. The nature of a voter's residency is not for the board to question, he said.

"It was a new element to this, and the board made the decision that it didn't fall in their authority to bring in a new measurement to the residency standard," Wittman said, adding that the board did express concern about the residency issue and asked that it be turned over to the legislative process for legal guidance.

"That's the crux of the issue up for debate, but (the Board of State Canvassers) didn't feel it was in their authority to resolve the issue," he added.

Rivet described the board's actions as "a classical political

punt," but he said it is unlikely that Citizens for Compassionate Care or any other group will appeal the decision.

"I think it's destined for the November ballot," Rivet said.

"We're now prepared for the other resolve, and we have a lot of the framework already in place," he said. "We hope that after summer ends, others who oppose this will formally join Citizens for Compassionate Care and we'll have a full-blown coalition to all do this under the same umbrella."

Merian's Friends, which was named after Merian Frederick, who was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's Disease and died with Dr. Kevorkian's assistance, is seeking funding to support its campaign effort, Pierce said.

"I think our chances are better than 50-50, but who knows?" he added.

In its July newsletter, the Michigan Catholic Conference stated that the church supports the ban on assisted suicide and rejects any law or social policy that sanctions suicide or assisted suicide.

The Michigan bishops' 1997 pastoral letter said, "Suicide — the conscious choice to destroy one's life — is always morally wrong. Concurring with someone's intention to commit suicide and cooperating in the process can never be condoned. It is especially tragic when undertaken by physicians whose very professional code charges them never to harm but always respect life."

Gov. John Engler plans to sign into law the ban on assisted suicide that Michigan legislators passed in March, but such a law would be overridden if voters approve Merian's Friends' proposal in November. — CNS

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(Continued from cover)

evangelization, catechisms, the holy mysteries of initiation, marriage preparation, Friday abstinence from meat, ecumenism, ecclesiastical offices and financial matters.

The promulgation of these laws is in response to the directions of the pope contained in the new *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, "...it is my intention that those who enjoy legislative power in each of the churches *sui iuris* take counsel as quickly as possible by issuing particular law, keeping in mind the traditions of their own rite as well as the teachings of the Second Vatican Council." Many matters in the new code are left up to the particular law of the *sui iuris* churches.

The Metropolis of Pittsburgh is a *sui iuris* church. This means that, to a large extent, it is self-governing. It has the right to enact laws to govern itself. This is done by the Council of Hierarchs composed of the eparchial bishops of the metropolis. When the bishops have finished preparing the text of the laws the metropolitan submits them to the Holy See for "reception". Upon receiving notification of reception, the metropolitan must promulgate the new laws.

The law concerning married priests is based on the decrees of the Second Vatican Council, Eastern canon law, and the pope's apostolic letter *Orientale lumen*, all of which direct a return to their authentic patrimony by the Eastern Catholic churches.

The Council of Hierarchs, in commenting on this restoration of the married priesthood, noted that the retention of the married presbyterate was one of the conditions of the Union of Uzhorod, that the prohibition of married clergy for Eastern Catholics in the United States brought great harm to the church, that there are currently over 100 married Roman Catholic priests serving lawfully in the United States and that there has been no difficulty among the faithful of the Latin church, and, finally, ecumenical considerations vis-a-vis the Orthodox churches. The Byzantine bishops also noted their many efforts and successes in returning to the Eastern patrimony in the areas of liturgy and doctrinal teaching.

Copies of the complete text of the new laws will be available to the public soon. ■

Study finds U.S. diocesan pastoral councils doing well

WASHINGTON — Last year 49 percent of U.S. Catholic dioceses had diocesan pastoral councils and 14 percent planned to start them soon, according to a nationwide study released July 28. It found that bishops who have pastoral councils value them most for consultation on pastoral issues and for developing a sense of diocesan mission and vision for the future. "PCs (pastoral councils) accomplish what they are intended to do," said the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, which conducted the study for two committees of the U.S. bishops.

"Those who work with PCs describe them as bodies that study pastoral issues, make recommendations on pastoral issues and serve as a consultative body" to the local bishop. Topics of evangelization, Catholic education and formation, lay ministry development and parish restructuring are highest on a list of pastoral issues which councils study "very much." Ranked lowest as a council issue was the allocation of financial and personnel resources in the diocese.